

## TIP SHEET FOR 826LA FUNDRAISING

Hi, I'm J. Ryan Stradal. I've been involved in two major fundraising events for 826LA (Mini-Golf for Cheaters & the Battle of the Bands). I've somehow managed to raise an okay amount of money for both—despite not being rich or famous, not really knowing anyone rich or famous, and not even having a cool moustache that makes people want to give me money for no reason.

Here are some ways I did it that I hope might work for you, and probably better, because you have more friends & more generous relatives (I am SURE of this).

### 1. Divide Them Up!

Break down all your known friends, co-workers, relatives, and acquaintances into small groups of people that all know each other. Email these small groups separately with your fundraising plea. Try to make the email personal to the group, and **don't** Bcc anyone—make sure that everyone sees who's getting the email and that it's not a lot of people and they all know each other.

### 2. Follow-Up

OK. At first, maybe one or two people out of that group, maximum, will probably donate. Here's the key move: Write the whole group singling out those one or two people for their generosity. Praising someone for generosity in a small group of known peers makes the other people in the group want to be praised & want to be generous. I always got most of my donations after the follow-up.

This works even better in person. If you work for a company that has weekly meetings, send out a fundraising email two days before the meeting. Then at the meeting, make a point of personally thanking whoever has donated by then. Someone who hasn't donated yet will say "Oh yeah, I meant to do that," which means you can now send out the link to everyone again. In less than a week, most of the people at that meeting will have donated. No job? Do the same thing with your religious group, sports team, and/or the people you watch *Lost* with.

### 3. Timeline

The people who don't respond to the first two salvos sometimes are merely procrastinators who would donate, but not when the event's a month away. What can often work for these folks is a narrative with a finish line.

Either set yourself up as an underdog against an unlikable opponent: "We are only \$400 behind a team of trial attorneys called "Orange You Glad I Didn't Say Banana" Or emphasize the ticking clock: "You only have 24 hours to help the kids!!! We need XX dollars by then!"

Think of this fundraiser as just one element in a larger public economy of generosity. One time I asked someone who owed me money to pay to 826LA instead, and they were happy to do that. Several times I have donated to other people's fundraising efforts, knowing I could depend on them to donate to mine. Match someone's donation if that would help with them.

And in any case, emphasize that their donation is **IMPERATIVE** to the organization's survival.

#### **4. What to write?**

So why is it imperative that this organization survive? Well, you're a part of it, for one. Your participation and enthusiasm for 826LA is already a **huge** selling point. If you're willing to wear glitter and shiny pants and angel wings while scooting around in circles in a lake—that says something. Show people pictures from last year. If you have a grandiose costume or plan, let people know about it! Show them **you** care, and **they** will.

Plus—folks who would never donate money to help kids might donate money to see you in spandex & ski goggles, or because they like the pop culture reference in your team name. People in L.A. are weird like that.

Finally, emphasize any or all of the following:

- a. the importance of 826LA in the community
- b. examples of cool things that 826LA does
- c. your personal involvement at 826LA & how it has affected you
- d. an example of a positive change or goal achieved in the life of a student you know
- e. how important it is that they donate now, immediately, knowing that none of these aforementioned things would be possible otherwise—and they're entirely enabled by the generosity of **YOU**, dear donor.

One thing: I would avoid portraying 826LA as an antidote to the LA public school system. Whatever you perceive of its benefits or shortcomings, we don't need to build ourselves up by tearing down the selfsame educational infrastructure we're trying to assist. Emphasize the positive—instead, contrast 826LA to the other choices a public school student may have after school, or mention services we provide that students can't get anywhere else.

That's all I can think of for now. I won't be competing against you at the Paddleboat Regatta (I'll be in North Dakota) so, that being the case—I wish you all the best of luck.

Hope we can hit \$40,000 this year!!!